

equal size, and of a nearly square form, the vertical is very broad and somewhat sinuate on its basal margin, behind that it narrows in a curve for about half its length, when it becomes parallel-sided, and finally terminates in a rounded apex; the superciliaries are large and broader than the vertical; there are eight upper labials, the fourth and fifth abutting on the eye.

The obtuse deep head, two loreal shields, and jet black colour, sufficiently indicate an almost more than specific difference between this species and all the other Australian Tree snakes. There are two specimens in the collection, the dimensions given I have taken from the largest.

NOTES ON SOME CUSTOMS OF THE ABORIGINES OF THE ALBERT DISTRICT, NEW SOUTH WALES.

BY C. S. WILKINSON, F.G.S. F.L.S., PRESIDENT.

Mr. W. H. J. Slee, the Government Inspector of Mines, has given me the following particulars regarding a singular ceremony which the Aboriginal tribes of the Mount Poole district perform, when, as is often the case in that arid region, they need rain.

In many parts of that country gypsum occurs abundantly in the soil, but the fibrous variety known as *Satin Spar* is comparatively rare. The latter is highly prized by the natives, and is called by them "rain-stone," for they believe that the Great Spirit uses it in making rain, and probably also because they regard it as solidified rain on account of the resemblance of its fibrous or striated structure to heavy rain; the more pronounced are the striations, the more the stone is valued.

About two years ago, Mr. Slee, when Warden of the Mount Poole Goldfield, was specially invited by the principal chiefs of the Mount Poole and Mokely tribes to attend a ceremony of "making rain." On the day appointed, the natives with the exception of the females, who are not allowed to see either the rain stone or the ceremony, assembled and formed in a circle, in the centre of which stood the oldest chief and Mr. Slee, no other person being permitted to enter the circle. After a great deal of talking, dancing, singing,

and mystical performances had been gone through by all the natives, the old chief produced the "rain-stone," which had been carefully kept wrapped-up in leaves and a piece of rag, and showed it to Mr. Slee, but would not let him to touch it. He then buried it in the sand.

On one of the creeks near the diggings are some marks of a high flood, which the natives said took place after they had performed the above mentioned ceremony over an unusually large rain-stone.



ON THE BRAIN OF GREY'S WHALE (*Kogia Greyi*.)

BY WILLIAM A. HASWELL, M.A., B.Sc.

[PLATE XXI.]

The acquisition recently by the Australian Museum of a fresh specimen of Grey's Whale has afforded me the opportunity of examining the brain of this rare Cetacean. For comparison I have the brain of only one other species, viz., that of the species of *Delphinus* (*D. Fosteri*) common on the New South Wales Coast.

The total length of the *Kogia* was nine feet six inches, which may be regarded as about the average length of these small Cetaceans. The length of the encephalon is $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches, of which $4\frac{1}{4}$ inches are taken up by the cerebral hemispheres; the weight of the whole brain with the membranes removed is about 16oz. In the medulla the olivary bodies are very large, though scarcely so prominent as in *Delphinus*. The cerebellum is relatively much smaller than in *Delphinus*; the greatest breadth is about four inches, the mesial lobe is smaller in proportion, and the lateral lobes are nearly symmetrical. The pons is not prominent, its breadth is about an inch, and its antero-posterior extent less than three-tenths of an inch. The antero-posterior extent of the nates is greater than that of the testes, but the latter are much the more prominent; they are separated on either side by a well-marked groove which makes an angle of about 60° with the mesial longitudinal axis.